



Benin

Basic Data in a nutshell	
Area	112,620 sq km
Coastline	121 km
Administrative division	12 departments
Capital	Porto-Novo
Population / habitat density	8,078,314 = 72 habitants/sq km
Population growth rate	2.674%
Languages	French (official), Fon and Yoruba (most common vernaculars in south), tribal languages (at least six major ones in north)
Economy	<u>Agriculture products:</u> cotton, corn, cassava (tapioca), yams, beans, palm oil, peanuts, cashews; livestock <u>Industries:</u> textiles, food processing, construction materials, cement
Terrain	mostly flat to undulating plain; some hills and low mountains
Climate	tropical; hot, humid in south; semiarid in north
Natural Resources	small offshore oil deposits, limestone, marble, timber
Biodiversity hotspots (according to Conservation International)	Guinean Forests of West Africa
Read more:	
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/	
- Human Development Reports: www.undp.org	
- biodiversity hotspots: http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/Pages/default.aspx	



(Source: CIA World Factbook)

(Sources: CIA World Factbook; Biodiversity hotspots of Conservation International)



Selected indicators of development status	
HDI *)	0.437 (rank 163 of 177)
Life expectancy at birth	<i>male</i> : 52.28 years <i>female</i> : 54.63 years
GDP per capita (UNDP, 2005)	1,141 US\$/year
GDP composition by sector	<p>52% 33,20% 14,50%</p> <p>■ agriculture ■ industry □ services</p>
Infant mortality	77.85 deaths/1,000 live births
Adult literacy rate (15 years and older)	34.7%
Population using an improved water source 1990/2004	63% / 67%
Children underweight for age (under age 5)	23%
Population below poverty line (2 US\$/day)	73.7%
Gini-Index for income distribution **)	0.365
Official Development Assistance (ODA) received	
Total amount / per capita (UNDP, 2005)	349,100,000 US\$ / 41.4 US\$
% of ODA in GDP 1990/2005	14.5 % / 8.1%
Read more:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human Development Reports: www.undp.org - UNDP Statistics for Benin: http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_BEN.html 	

(Sources: UNDP Human Development Report 2007; CIA World Factbook)

*) The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative index of social development status. The HDI is calculated on the basis of life expectancy, the literacy rate and real purchasing power per capita. The HDI is expressed as a value between 1 (high) and 0 (low)

***) The Gini coefficient is a measure of personal income distribution within a country or region. It is expressed as a value between 0 (distribution fully equitable) and 1 (distribution fully inequitable)



Biological Diversity in Benin is ...

...the diversity of ecosystems:

Natural geographic units of Benin:

- the southern coastal zone with lagoons, swamps and lakes; dominated by mangrove woods
- in the north follows the fertile plane ("terre de barre") with plateaus up to 250m altitude
- in the transition zone between the humid subequatorial climate to the northern semiarid climate there is the plane of the pre-cambrian basement with altitudes up to 400m. The typical vegetation of this area are dry forests and savannahs
- the foothills of the Togo Mountains, the Atakora Mountains, are located in the northwest. It rises up to 800m altitude and their soils are nutrient-poor
- in the West of the Atakora Mountains there are the Pendjari and Niger Plains with dry savannahs

- ➔ forest area (2005) = 23,500 sq km (21.3% of the national area)
- ➔ 16% of the total land area was naturally forested

...the diversity between and within species:

- number of vascular plant species: 3,000
- 449 marine species and 180 freshwater fish species
- avian fauna have confirmed the presence of 371 bird species
- 47 species of mammals (weighing more than 5kg)

Efforts to protect Beninese Biodiversity:

- National Environmental Action Plan (Programme National de Gestion de l'Environnement) 2001: Preservation of the primary forests and the biodiversity, promotion of sustainable methods of production
- 61 protected areas (2003) which cover 22,7% of the total land area
- 6,7% of total land area (7780 sq km) are strictly protected (according to IUCN categories I and II)
- 4 Ramsar Sites (i.a. Zone humide de la rivi re Pendjari), 2 biosphere reserves (Pendjari and W) and 1 UNESCO World Heritage Site (Royal Palaces of Abomey)



Read more:

- biodiversity hotspots: <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/Pages/default.aspx>
- details of the CBD: <http://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=bj>
- Global Environmental Outlook of the UNEP (GEO-4): http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/report/GEO-4_Report_Full_en.pdf
- Ministry of the Environment Benin (Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature (MEPN)): [http://www.gouv.bj/ministere.php?id_rub=34&lib_rub=Minist%E8re%20de%20l'Environnement%20et%20de%20la%20Protection%20de%20la%20Nature%20\(MEPN\)](http://www.gouv.bj/ministere.php?id_rub=34&lib_rub=Minist%E8re%20de%20l'Environnement%20et%20de%20la%20Protection%20de%20la%20Nature%20(MEPN))
- Biodiversity in German Development Cooperation: www.gtz.de/biodiversity
- Earthtrends Country Profiles: http://earthtrends.wri.org/country_profiles/
- UNESCO World Heritage List: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>
- UNESCO Man and Biosphere: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/>
- Ramsar Sites: <http://www.ramsar.org/sitelist.pdf>

(Sources: Dittrich, Monika & Eißing, Stefanie (2007): *Use it or lose it*; World Resources Institute – *Earth-trends*; UNDP 2005; CBD Country Profiles)

Benins' current environmental challenges are:

inadequate supplies of potable water; poaching threatens wildlife populations; deforestation; desertification

Average and annual change of forest area (1990-2005): -1,9%

a loss of fertility and the erosion of soils

the withdrawal of forest cover and the impoverishment of consumable natural resources, especially the fauna and fish resources

climate change, air pollution, coastal erosion through sea level rise and the introduction of port infrastructure

Migration

Expansion of the cotton industry

no protected areas

in the last 20 years forested areas have been largely degraded, with a loss of 987,607 ha, and savannahs have shown the largest degradation, losing about 1,945,137 ha

Decrease of the land area covered by primary forest

Overfishing in the lagoons

(Sources: CIA World Factbook; CBD Country Profiles)



Cultural diversity in Benin is based on...

...different ethnic groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fon and related 39.2% - Adja and related 15.2% - Yoruba and related 12.3% - Bariba and related 9.2% - Peulh and related 7% - Ottamari and related 6.1% - Yoa-Lokpa and related 4% - Dendi and related 2.5% - other 1.6% (includes Europeans), unspecified 2.9%
...different religions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christian 42.8% (Catholic 27.1%, Celestial 5%, Methodist 3.2%, other Protestant 2.2%, other 5.3%) - Muslim 24.4% - Vodoun 17.3% - other 15.5%
- Read more: Dittrich, Monika & Eißing, Stefanie (2007): Use it or lose it.	

(Source: CIA World Factbook)

Ecological Footprint	0.8 global ha/person
Biocapacity	0.9 global ha/person

Within the global comparison, Benin ranges on place no. 48 - see bar chart:
http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?country=BJ&indicatorid=13

(Source: www.footprintnetwork.org)